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## PSC OPENS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON MPC SALE TO NORTHWESTERN CORP.

The Montana Public Service Commission invites written comments until March 16 from Montana Power Company customers on the proposed sale of the company's utility operations to NorthWestern Corporation.

Interested persons may submit their comments by mailing them to the PSC, PO Box 202601, Helena, 59620-2601, or by submitting them electronically using the PSC's web-based comment form at <http://psc.state.mt.us/PublicComment/PublicComment.htm>. Submitted comments must include the docket number of this proceeding, which is D2001.1.5.

MPC announced last October that it had entered into an agreement to sell its natural gas and electric transmission and distribution operations to NorthWestern for \$602 million, in addition to which NorthWestern will assume \$488 million in existing MPC debt. The PSC received MPC's and NorthWestern's joint application seeking approval of the sale in January. Under the terms of the proposed sale agreement, NorthWestern will maintain at least at current levels MPC employees' base salary, benefits and pension plan for two years after the sale closes. NorthWestern also agreed to continue for at least two years certain charitable contributions and other financial support for nonprofit organizations and educational institutions in amounts comparable to MPC's past practice.

NorthWestern is a South Dakota-based corporation whose subsidiaries include NorthWestern Public Service, a utility that provides electric and natural gas service to 125,000 customers in the Midwest.

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